



AIMLESS DRAINAGE COMPARED TO DENDRITIC DRAINAGE

aimless drainage

A stream or river with an aimless drainage pattern wanders or meanders, it seems, at random across a plain, the flow resembling large, loopy script written on the land. Such meandering waterways—also known as deranged drainages—tend to form in either recently glaciated terrain, where no clear slope funnels water toward the sea, or in the collapsed limestone rubble of karst topography. Good examples of aimless drainages can be found in the glacier-scoured landscapes of Quebec Province. JAN DEBLIEU

ait

An ait, or eyot as it is sometimes spelled, is a small island, especially one found in a river, but also in a lake. Ait is, in fact, derived from the Old English word for small island. In Mary Clearman Blew's *All But the Waltz: A Memoir of Five Generations in the Life of a Montana Family*, the author remembers going with her grandmother and a friend to rescue a sow and her piglets caught in the middle of the rain-swollen Judith River: "On a bare ait at midcurrent, completely surrounded and only inches above that muddy roiling water, huddle the pigs." Although the term is seldom heard in modern times, ait-land has a particularly pleasing aural kinship to its synonym island, despite the fact that the two do not share a common derivation. KIM BARNES

alcove

In its most common geologic application, alcove refers to a recess or niche in a cave or in the walls of complexly formed canyonland. This is one of many such terms with its origins in architectural expression. In a